Met Office

NEWS

2018 - the UK's second sunniest year on record

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A warm year will probably be the second sunniest on record, as a mild December closes a drier than average 2018.

With close to 1575 hours of sunshine so far, 2018 is already ahead of the 1566 hours clocked in 1995 that is currently the second sunniest year – but the last week of December looks unlikely to bring the sort of weather needed to overhaul 2003's record of 1587 hours (UK sunshine records go back to 1929).

May was this year's sunniest month, and with 246 hours of sunshine it is the sunniest May on record. The high pressure and sunny weather continued through the long days of June and July, contributing significantly to the annual total. By contrast December has been the dullest month – with only 34 hours of sunshine so far, it looks unlikely to beat January's 49 hours.

The UK mean temperature in 2018 will be somewhere between 9.4 and 9.5 °C. The figures for the highest-ranked annual temperatures are so close, the last few days of December will make all the difference between 2018 finishing just inside or just outside the top ten warmest years on record.

Temperature records for the entire UK date back to 1910.

Warmest years in the UK since 1910

Rank	Mean Annual Temperature °C	Year
1	9.9	2014
2	9.7	2006
3	9.6	2011
4	9.6	2007
5	9.6	2017
6	9.5	2003
7	9.5	2004
8	9.5	2002
9	9.5	2005
10	9.4	1990

If 2018 does make it in to the top ten, it will mean that every one of the hottest ten years on record will have been in this century.

The hottest month of 2018 was July, with an average temperature of 17.3 °C, with February coldest at an average 2.4 °C.

Although it has been a drier than average year, it has not been exceptionally dry overall for the UK. The UK in 2018 received close to 90% of average annual rainfall. Winter and spring were somewhat wetter than average, but were followed by an extended summer dry spell. June was the driest month, with an average of 35mm falling across the UK – but parts of southern England were particularly dry, having their lowest rainfall for over 100 years. January was the wettest month, with 134mm of rain.

Dr Mark McCarthy, head of the Met Office National Climate Information Centre, said, “The last week of December will be of significant interest to us in finding out where 2018 ranks in terms of historic average annual temperatures.

"We experienced some memorable extremes of hot and cold weather this year – the summer heatwave contrasted sharply with the freezing conditions during the so-called ‘Beast from the East’ in February and March.

"However, even if the last few days of December are cool enough to keep 2018 out of the all-time hottest top 10, the overall story for the year fits into the general warming trend we have seen in the century so far.”

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